

Grandview, Mo.  
June 22, 1911

Dear Bessie:  
Would you wear a solitaire on  
your left hand should I get it?  
. . . You know, were I an Italian  
or a poet I would commence  
and use all the luscious lan-  
guage of two continents. I am  
not either but only . . . [an]  
American farmer . . . I've been  
crazy about you ever since we  
went to Sunday school together.  
But I never had the nerve to  
think you'd even look at me.

More than sincerely,  
Harry



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Today the Truman Farm Home and 11 acres are all that remain of the family farm. Harry wrote letters to Bess on a desk like this one in the farm's dining room.

## The Truman Farm—Then and Now

Truman returned to Grandview in 1906 to help on the 600-acre family farm. The house had no electricity or indoor plumbing. Backbreaking labor began at 5 am and lasted 12 to 14 hours. "There is always something the matter with a crop," he wrote to Bess in 1913. "It's either too dry or too wet or too short or too long or too much or not enough. *If* is the largest word in a farmer's language." Truman's father died in 1914, and the full responsibility for running the farm fell upon 30-year-old Harry. Truman accepted the challenge, and it taught him what became his best-known quality—common sense. "It was on the farm that Harry got his common sense," his mother Martha once said. "He didn't get it in town."

**Visiting the Farm Today** Harry S Truman National Historic Site includes the old Grandview farm house and 11 acres of the original 600-acre farm where Harry Truman lived from age 22–33 (1906–1917). These years represent a lesser-known period of Truman's life. Here he grew from a young man of modest ambitions into the person that would become the President of the US. A visit here can provide a more complete picture of this man who held the nation's highest office.

**Touring the Farm** The grounds are open year-round, dawn to dusk. Explore on your own. Cell phone tour and brochures available. Buildings are closed. No restroom facilities. Located at 12301 Blue Ridge Blvd., Grandview, MO.



NPS / BRIAN HODUSKI



NPS

Harry and Bess Truman lived in this Victorian home for over 50 years (above). The home across the street is where Harry's favorite cousins, Nellie and Ethel Noland, lived (left).

## The Close-Knit Families of Harry and Bess

Harry had help in winning Bess' heart. By coincidence his relatives, the Nolands, lived across the street from the Wallaces. During a visit in 1910, Harry happily volunteered to return a cake plate to 219 N. Delaware, where Bess had lived since 1904. This encounter changed their lives forever.

Harry began regular visits from Grandview, and to save a round-trip, he often slept in the Noland parlor. In 1919 Truman married Bess and moved into the Wallace home. Bess' mother Madge lived in the home, and her brothers Frank and George had cottages behind the main house. The families enjoyed being together. The Trumans never allowed fame to come between them and their dearest friends—their family.

**Viewing the Family Homes Today** The Truman home at 219 N. Delaware Ave. is open by guided tour only. The Noland home at 216 N. Delaware and the Wallace homes at 601 and 605 W. Truman Road are not open to the public. Please enjoy viewing them from the sidewalk.

**216 N. Delaware Avenue** The Nolands, Truman's aunt, uncle, and cousins, lived here. For nine years it was a vital link for Harry between the Grandview farm and Independence as he courted Bess.

**601 and 605 W. Truman Road** Bess' brothers and their wives lived in these homes. Frank and Natalie lived in the brown one; George and May in the green.



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This cozy study, filled with over 1,000 books, was a favorite room for Harry and Bess. He enjoyed biographies, histories, and political studies. She loved mysteries.



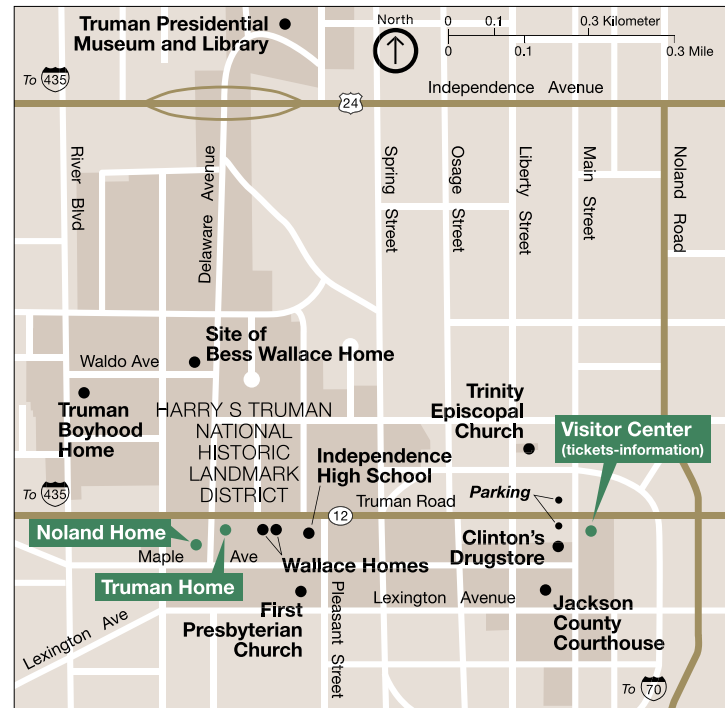
**Directions to Grandview Truman Farm** • From I-435, take US 71 exit; go south 2.2 miles; turn right (west) onto Blue Ridge Blvd.; farm is 0.6 mile on left. • From US 71, proceed as above. • From I-70, take exit 8A onto I-435; exit onto US 71 (left lane exit); proceed as above.

## Visiting the Truman Home and Historic Independence

**Truman Visitor Center (tickets-information)** Begin your visit at the park visitor center at 223 N. Main Street. It has ticket sales for the Truman home tour, information, a film, exhibits, and a bookstore.

**Guided Tours of Truman's Home** The Truman home is at 219 N. Delaware Avenue; guided tours only. Buy tickets at the visitor center (five blocks east). Each tour is limited to eight people; there may be a waiting period. There is an introductory film shown at the visitor center. View exhibits and browse the bookstore before your tour begins.

**Accessibility** We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. For infor-



mation go to a visitor center, ask a ranger, call, or check our website.

**Tips for a Great Guided Home Tour** Get your Truman home tickets early! Tickets are sold the day of the tour, first-come, first-served (no advance reservations). • Tours begin promptly at the front gate of the Truman home at the time stamped on your ticket. Allow 10 minutes to walk from the visitor center to the Truman home. • Be extra careful on stairs. • Smoking, drinking, eating, pets, chewing gum, and photography are not allowed on the grounds or in the home. • Restrooms are located in the visitor center only! • Please stay on the dark gray carpet, and do not touch walls, furniture, or objects.

• For firearms and other regulations ask a ranger or check the park website. • All historic and natural features are protected by federal law.

**More Information** Harry S Truman National Historic Site 223 North Main Street Independence, MO 64050 816-254-9929 [www.nps.gov/hstr](http://www.nps.gov/hstr)

Harry S Truman Historic Site is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about national parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities, visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).

**Directions to the Truman Visitor Center (tickets and information)** • From I-435, take Truman Rd. exit 60; go east 3½ miles to the visitor center at Truman Rd. and Main St. • From I-70, take Noland Rd. exit 12; go north four miles; turn west onto Truman Rd.; go two blocks to the visitor center.

**Seeing Independence** Strolling around Independence is like stepping back in time. Its small downtown area and historic neighborhood are largely unchanged from the time when Truman walked these streets over 40 years ago. Be sure to see Independence Square, Jackson County Courthouse, the Truman statue, and Clinton's Drugstore. Neighborhood highlights include the Noland, Truman, and Wallace homes on Delaware Ave. and Truman Rd. At the park visitor center get the free, self-guiding *Harry S Truman Walking Trail* brochure that tells you about over 40 sites in the historic district.

It is a short drive to the Truman Presidential Museum and Library, where Harry and Bess Truman are buried. US 24 and Delaware Ave. Independence, MO 64050 816-268-8200 [www.trumanlibrary.org](http://www.trumanlibrary.org)

Tourist information: Independence Tourism Dept. 111 E. Maple Ave. Independence, MO 64050 816-325-7111, 800-748-7323 [www.ci.independence.mo.us](http://www.ci.independence.mo.us)



HARRY S. TRUMAN LIBRARY

In 1940 creditors forced the sale of the farm. A sheriff ordered Truman's mother and sister to leave. Truman lamented to Bess that his mother "has been calling that farm home since 1868. She helped her father set out those maple trees in the fall of that year. . . ."



HARRY S. TRUMAN LIBRARY

Young Bess Wallace poses on the railing of her home at 219 N. Delaware. Years later, on the eve of their 23rd wedding anniversary in 1942, Truman wrote that his sweetheart is "as good looking and lovable as when she was sixteen."